

i am a hearing person with deaf parents, deaf inlaws, deaf children and many deaf friends.

Video phones are wonderful for equal access for deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Unfortunately, some providers provide a wonderful service BUT limit and restrict use of the video phone through their provider only. one provider has gone so far as restrict businesses and even schools and universities to using only their service. This is unfair and not right.

For example, my daughter attends Gallaudet University. She is fortunate to have her own video phone in her room. Just as other hearing students have a telephone in their rooms, she has a video phone. Her rights to access the phone were denied because the school had signed a contract with one company and if anyone on campus, staff or student, had equipment(video phone/d-link) from another provider, it would not work. This is like if I had a cell phone and that cell phone provider was not the cell phone provider of my building, i would have NO access to my phone because I CHOOSE a different provider. Isn't that amazing? it is downright wrong and my daughters rights are be violated. The FCC is allowing this to happen. Do you realize this is happening? If my daughter had an emergency at her dorm, she would not be able to make the phone call because she has the "wrong" provider. This is absurd! So since the beginning of this school year she had to put away her phone and refused to use the other provider out of principal. She has a right to choose which video phone provider she chooses, we still live in a free state and her rights are being challenged. Ironically, it is at a school, we felt would be best for her and that access would not be a problem.Gallaudet is a place for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students to feel safe to express themselves, where communication would NOT be an issue and most important of all that there would be the least amount of opression in this environment. Well, guess we were wrong! Students at Gallaudet and us in the community should be allowed to choose from a list of vendors who have the equipment, and then be able to choose the service provider of choice too.

Another point to make is that many of the deaf individuals that I come across, didn't have a clue that they would be restricted before getting the equipment. Basically a cookie is held in front of them ( free video phone equipment) and of course, they want it, its FREE! Once they get it, they findout that they cant use other providers and and if they use a video remote interpreting service, if it is not the same provider, the image is hard to see and understand. To the unknowledgable person, they think it is the other persons equipment, not knowing that in reality it is their equipment is not compatable with others if they did not get it from the same company.

These are only a few examples. I hope that you will take in consideration all the public comments that you recieve and realize how important this equipement is to their daily lives.

Thank YOu for your time.